

It's the Brand Folks!

Michael Young, the Vice-President Technical Programs and Marketing Services with Canada Pork International demonstrated at MPC AGM.

At the recent AGM of the Manitoba Pork Council Michael Young, the Vice-President Technical Programs and Marketing Services with Canada Pork International demonstrated how he sells pork around the world, especially to the Asian people in Japan, China, and South Korea. It starts with the branding known as Verified Canadian Pork and its role in building awareness of Canadian pork in export markets.

First, he talked about Verified Canadian Pork and how it came into being.

“Verified Canadian Pork is a brand created by the producers and packers who are part of the program. The brand attributes itself focusing on many things our producers do. For instance, the Canadian Quality Assurance [CQA] program, which is evolving into Canadian Pork Excellence,” said Young. “The fact that traceability is mandatory in Canada, a point of differentiation, and it provides a safe and secure source of high-quality protein for our customers, so that's in one of the brand attributes. All the Verified Canadian Pork has to come from CQA-accredited farms, processed at federally-approved plants, and then they can use that brand to market their product.”

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It's the Brand Folks!, cont'd

Attendees at the MPC AGM look at various cuts of Verified Canadian Pork.

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He said the proof points of the brand are fundamental for, in other words, CQA accreditation. The plants that are part of the program require their suppliers are fully accredited under the CQA program, so that covers off that. The next step is the mandatory traceability, which is a law in Canada. While Canada doesn't have any growth hormones approved for pork, all producers in Canada produce hormone growth free pork. The attribute is the pork must come from federally inspected plants that are members.

"Originally, the mandate came from the Canadian Pork Council looking for a national pork organization to build a national brand for Canadian pork," said Young. "Up until that point, we weren't using that as a marketing angle of the things that producers are doing on the farm, but it turns out these things are very, very important to our customers. They're a big part of the success that Canada pork has had in other markets, so we decided to use that as part of the branding."

Michael Young said through popular demand by end user customers, meeting further with processors, retailers, and food service operators and consumers, they've created a website which is Verifiedcanadianpork.com.

"So if you go there, you can look at the attributes, the brand promise, the proof points that stand in place. It's also a good site for getting recipes. We have home meat cutting videos attached to it. So it's kind of a catch-all website to bring a lot of this information available, so I would encourage you to check it out," he said.

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It's the Brand Folks!, cont'd

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He said it has worked out very well going on four and half years with over 90 co-brands, so Verified Canadian Pork co-branded products in the marketplace. CPI extended the brand to Japan, China, and Hong Kong with massive success in Japan.

Processors demanded the expansion of the program from the domestic market to the export market.

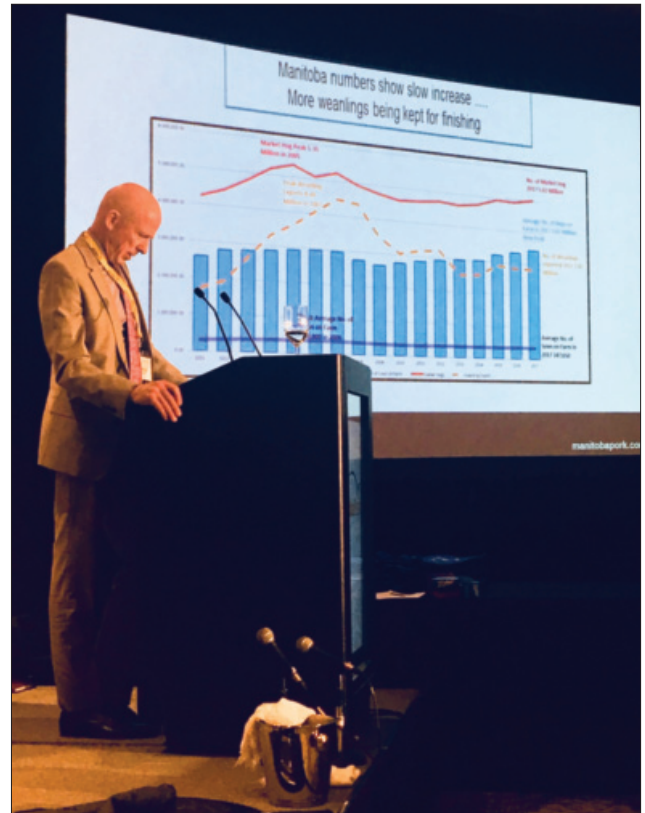
“We had always hoped that we would roll it into the export market, but it the processors surprised us by wanting to do it sooner than later,” said Young. “It's gone well as our Japan office is using approximately 1.5 million Verified Canadian Pork labels every month. So those are packaged pork products that are carrying that brand in the Japanese marketplace every month.”

One final point, Young said the Japanese consumers are accepting this labeling very well because it resonates perfectly with what they want to hear. The Japanese market's one of the

most robust markets to be in and one of the most lucrative markets in the world and the Japanese consumer's very demanding.

“They are not self-sufficient, so they know they have to import pork and Canada has worked in Japan for over 50 years,” he said. “Last ten years we switched our volumes from frozen to chilled, which is the most important and the highest quality. We started out at about 22 per cent of the chilled share; as of January 2018, at 48 per cent of the chilled pork share in Japan, so the growth is phenomenal.” •

— By Harry Siemens



The Chair of Manitoba Pork, George Matheson told the AGM containing an outbreak of Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea that struck the southeastern part of the province one year ago is an example of all stakeholders coming together in a concerted effort for the successful handling of a bad situation.



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 Westerner Park, Red Deer, AB
 Trade Show: 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
 Holiday Inn, Gasoline Alley
 Reception: 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
 Awards Banquet Dinner: 6:30 pm

Thursday, June 15, 2017
 Westerner Park, Red Deer, AB
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 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

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